3 1761 03551 0692

A CATHEDRAL SINGER

JAMES LANE ALLEN

Lot # 3

Grace H. Edwards — (1)

from

Mrs Lindsey —

June 1916

Germantown —

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/cathedralsingerw00alleuoft

A Cathedral Singer

A Cathedral Singer

BY

JAMES LANE ALLEN

Author of "The Sword of Youth," "The Bride of the Mistletoe," "The Kentucky Cardinal," "The Choir Invisible," etc.

WITH FRONTISPIECE BY
SIGISMOND DE IVANOWSKI

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1916

PS
1034
C38
1916

Copyright, 1914, 1916, by
THE CENTURY CO.

Published, March, 1916

TO
PITY AND TO FAITH

A Cathedral Singer

A Cathedral Singer

I

SLOWLY on Morningside Heights rises the Cathedral of St. John the Divine: standing on a high rock under the Northern sky above the long wash of the untroubled sea, above the wash of the troubled waves of men.

It has fit neighbors. Across the street to the north looms the many-towered gray-walled Hospital of St. Luke—cathedral of our ruins, of our sufferings and our dust, near the cathedral of our souls.

Across the block to the south is situated a shed-like two-story building with dormer-windows and a crumpled three-

sided roof, the studios of the National Academy of Design; and under that low brittle skylight youth toils over the shapes and colors of the visible vanishing paradise of the earth in the shadow of the cathedral which promises an unseen, an eternal one.

At the rear of the cathedral, across the roadway, stands a low stone wall. Just over the wall the earth sinks like a precipice to a green valley bottom far below. Out here is a rugged slope of rock and verdure and forest growth which brings into the city an ancient presence, nature—nature, the Elysian Fields of the art school, the potter's field of the hospital, the harvest field of the church.

This strip of nature fronts the dawn and is called Morningside Park. Past the foot of it a thoroughfare stretches northward and southward, level and

wide and smooth. Over this thoroughfare the two opposite-moving streams of the city's traffic and travel rush headlong. Beyond the thoroughfare an embankment of houses shoves its mass before the eyes, and beyond the embankment the city spreads out over flats where human beings are as thick as river reeds.

Thus within small compass humanity is here: the cathedral, the hospital, the art school, and a strip of nature, and a broad highway along which, with their hearth-fires flickering fitfully under their tents of stone, are encamped life's restless, light-hearted, heavy-hearted Gipsies.

It was Monday morning and it was nine o'clock. Over at the National Academy of Design, in an upper room, the members of one of the women's por-

trait classes were assembled, ready to begin work. Easels had been drawn into position; a clear light from the blue sky of the last of April fell through the opened roof upon new canvases fastened to the frames. And it poured down bountifully upon intelligent young faces. The scene was a beautiful one, and it was complete except in one particular: the teacher of the class was missing—the teacher and a model.

Minutes passed without his coming, and when at last he did enter the room, he advanced two or three steps and paused as though he meant presently to go out again. After his usual quiet good-morning with his sober smile, he gave his alert listeners the clue to an unusual situation:

"I told the class that to-day we should begin a fresh study. I had not myself decided what this should be. Several

models were in reserve, any one of whom could have been used to advantage at this closing stage of the year's course. Then the unexpected happened: on Saturday a stranger, a woman, came to see me and asked to be engaged. It is this model that I have been waiting for down-stairs."

Their thoughts instantly passed to the model: his impressive manner, his respectful words, invested her with mystery, with fascination. His countenance lighted up with wonderful interest as he went on:

"She is not a professional; she has never posed. In asking me to engage her she proffered barely the explanation which she seemed to feel due herself. I turn this explanation over to you because she wished, I think, that you also should not misunderstand her. It is the fee, then, that is needed, the model's

wage; she has felt the common lash of the poor. Plainly here is some one who has stepped down from her place in life, who has descended far below her inclinations, to raise a small sum of money. Why she does so is of course her own sacred and delicate affair. But the spirit in which she does this becomes our affair, because it becomes a matter of expression with her. This self-sacrifice, this ordeal which she voluntarily undergoes to gain her end, shows in her face; and if while she poses, you should be fortunate enough to see this look along with other fine things, great things, it will be your aim to transfer them all to your canvases—if you can."

He smiled at them with a kind of fostering challenge to their over-confident impulses and immature art. But he had not yet fully brought out what he

had in mind about the mysterious stranger and he continued:

"We teachers of art schools in engaging models have to take from human material as we find it. The best we find is seldom or never what we would prefer. If I, for instance, could have my choice, my students would never be allowed to work from a model who repelled the student or left the student indifferent. No students of mine, if I could have my way, should ever paint from a model that failed to call forth the finest feelings. Otherwise, how can your best emotions have full play in your work; and unless your best emotions enter into your work, what will your work be worth? For if you have never before understood the truth, try to realize it now: that you will succeed in painting only through the best that is in you; just as only the best in you

will ever carry you triumphantly to the end of any practical human road that is worth the travel; just as you will reach all life's best goals only through your best. And in painting remember that the best is never in the eye, for the eye can only perceive, the eye can only direct; and the best is never in the hand, for the hand can only measure, the hand can only move. In painting the best comes from emotion. A human being may lack eyes and be none the poorer in character; a human being may lack hands and be none the poorer in character; but whenever in life a person lacks any great emotion, that person is the poorer in everything. And so in painting you can fail after the eye has gained all necessary knowledge, you can fail after your hand has received all necessary training, either because nature has denied you the foundations of

great feeling, or because, having these foundations, you have failed to make them the foundations of your work.

"But among a hundred models there might not be one to arouse such emotion. Actually in the world, among the thousands of people we know, how few stir in us our best, force us to our best! It is the rarest experience of our lifetimes that we meet a man or a woman who literally drives us to the realization of what we really are and can really do when we do our best. What we all most need in our careers is the one who can liberate within us that lifelong prisoner whose doom it is to remain a captive until another sets it free—our best. For we can never set our best free by our own hands; that must always be done by another."

They were listening to him with a startled recognition of their inmost

selves. He went on to drive home his point about the stranger:

"I am going to introduce to you, then, a model who beyond all the others you have worked with will liberate in you your finer selves. It is a rare opportunity. Do not thank me. I did not find her. Life's storms have blown her violently against the walls of the art school; we must see to it at least that she be not further bruised while it becomes her shelter, her refuge. Who she is, what her life has been, where she comes from, how she happens to arrive here—these are privacies into which of course we do not intrude. Immediately behind herself she drops a curtain of silence which shuts away every such sign of her past. But there are other signs of that past which she cannot hide and which it is our privilege, our duty, the province of our art, to read. They are written

on her face, on her hands, on her bearing; they are written all over her—the bruises of life's rudenesses, the lingering shadows of dark days, the unwounded pride once and the wounded pride now, the unconquerable will, a soaring spirit whose wings were meant for the upper air but which are broken and beat the dust. All these are sublime things to paint in any human countenance; they are the footprints of destiny on our faces. The greatest masters of the brush that the world has ever known could not have asked for anything greater. When you behold her, perhaps some of you may think of certain brief but eternal words of Pascal: 'Man is a reed that bends but does not break.' Such is your model, then, a woman with a great countenance; the fighting face of a woman at peace. Now out upon the darkened battle-field

of this woman's face shines one serene sun, and it is that sun that brings out upon it its marvelous human radiance, its supreme expression: the love of the mother. Your model is the beauty of motherhood, the sacredness of motherhood, the glory of motherhood: that is to be the portrait of her that you are to paint."

He stopped. Their faces glowed; their eyes disclosed depths in their natures never stirred before; from out those depths youthful, tender creative forces came forth, eager to serve, to obey. He added a few particulars:

"For a while after she is posed you will no doubt see many different expressions pass rapidly over her face. This will be a new and painful experience to which she will not be able to adapt herself at once. She will be uncomfort-

able, she will be awkward, she will be embarrassed, she will be without her full value. But I think from what I discovered while talking with her that she will soon grow oblivious to her surroundings. They will not overwhelm her; she will finally overwhelm them. She will soon forget you and me and the studio; the one ruling passion of her life will sweep back into consciousness; and then out upon her features will come again that marvelous look which has almost remodeled them to itself alone."

He added, "I will go for her. By this time she must be waiting downstairs."

As he turned he glanced at the screens placed at that end of the room; behind these the models made their preparations to pose.

"I have arranged," he said signifi-

cantly, "that she shall leave her things down-stairs."

It seemed long before they heard him on the way back. He came slowly, as though concerned not to hurry his model, as though to save her from the disrespect of urgency. Even the natural noise of his feet on the bare hallway was restrained. They listened for the sounds of her footsteps. In the tense silence of the studio a pin-drop might have been noticeable, a breath would have been audible; but they could not hear her footsteps. He might have been followed by a spirit. Those feet of hers must be very light feet, very quiet feet, the feet of the well-bred.

He entered and advanced a few paces and turned as though to make way for some one of far more importance than himself; and there walked forward and stopped at a delicate distance from them

all a woman, bareheaded, ungloved, slender, straight, of middle height, and in life's middle years—Rachel Truesdale.

She did not look at him or at them; she did not look at anything. It was not her rôle to notice. She merely waited, perfectly composed, to be told what to do. Her thoughts and emotions did not enter into the scene at all; she was there solely as having been hired for work.

One privilege she had exercised unsparingly—not to offer herself for this employment as becomingly dressed for it. She submitted herself to be painted in austerest fidelity to nature, plainly dressed, her hair parted and brushed severely back. Women, sometimes great women, have in history, at the hour of their supreme tragedies, thus demeaned themselves—for the hospital,

for baptism, for the guillotine, for the stake, for the cross.

But because she made herself poor in apparel, she became most rich in her humanity. There was nothing for the eye to rest upon but her bare self. And thus the contours of the head, the beauty of the hair, the line of it along the forehead and temples, the curvature of the brows, the chiseling of the proud nostrils and the high bridge of the nose, the molding of the mouth, the modeling of the throat, the shaping of the shoulders, the grace of the arms and the hands—all became conspicuous, absorbing. The slightest elements of physique and of personality came into view powerful, unforgetable.

She stood, not noticing anything, waiting for instructions. With the courtesy which was the soul of him and the secret of his genius for inspiring

others to do their utmost, the master of the class glanced at her and glanced at the members of the class, and tried to draw them together with a mere smile of sympathetic introduction. It was an attempt to break the ice. For them it did break the ice; all responded with a smile for her or with other play of the features that meant gracious recognition. With her the ice remained unbroken; she withheld all response to their courteous overtures. Either she may not have trusted herself to respond; or waiting there merely as a model, she declined to establish any other understanding with them whatsoever. So that he went further in the kindness of his intention and said:

"Madam, this is my class of eager, warm, generous young natures who are to have the opportunity of trying to paint you. They are mere beginners;

their art is still unformed. But you may believe that they will put their best into what they are about to undertake; the loyalty of the hand, the respect of the eye, the tenderness of their memories, consecration to their art, their dreams and hopes of future success. Now if you will be good enough to sit here, I will pose you."

He stepped toward a circular revolving-platform placed at the focus of the massed easels: it was the model's rack of patience, the mount of humiliation, the scaffold of exposure.

She had perhaps not understood that this would be required of her, this indignity, that she must climb upon a block like an old-time slave at an auction. For one instant her fighting look came back and her eyes, though they rested on vacancy, blazed on vacancy and an ugly red rushed over her face

which had been whiter than colorless. Then as though she had become disciplined through years of necessity to do the unworthy things that must be done, she stepped resolutely though unsteadily upon the platform. A long procession of men and women had climbed thither from many a motive on life's upward or downward road.

He had specially chosen a chair for a three-quarter portrait, stately, richly carved; about it hung an atmosphere of high-born things.

Now, the body has definite memories as the mind has definite memories, and scarcely had she seated herself before the recollections of former years revived in her and she yielded herself to the chair as though she had risen from it a moment before. He did not have to pose her; she had posed herself by

grace of bygone luxurious ways. A few changes in the arrangement of the hands he did make. There was required some separation of the fingers; excitement caused her to hold them too closely together. And he drew the entire hands into notice; he specially wished them to be appreciated in the portrait. They were wonderful hands: they looked eloquent with the histories of generations; their youthfulness seemed centuries old. Yet all over them, barely to be seen, were the marks of life's experience, the delicate but dread sculpture of adversity.

For a while it was as he had foreseen. She was aware only of the brutality of her position; and her face, by its confused expressions and quick changes of color, showed what painful thoughts surged. Afterward a change came gradually. As though she could en-

dure the ordeal only by forgetting it and could forget it only by looking ahead into the happiness for which it was endured, slowly there began to shine out upon her face its ruling passion—the acceptance of life and the love of the mother glinting as from a cloud-hidden sun across the world's storm. When this expression had come out, it stayed there. She had forgotten her surroundings, she had forgotten herself. Poor indeed must have been the soul that would not have been touched by the spectacle of her, thrilled by her as by a great vision.

There was silence in the room of young workers. Before them, on the face of the unknown, was the only look that the whole world knows—the love and self-sacrifice of the mother; perhaps the only element of our better humanity that never once in the history of man-

kind has been misunderstood and ridiculed or envied and reviled.

Some of them worked with faces brightened by thoughts of devoted mothers at home; the eyes of a few were shadowed by memories of mothers alienated or dead.

II

THAT morning on the ledge of rock at the rear of the cathedral Nature hinted to passers what they would more abundantly see if fortunate enough to be with her where she was entirely at home—out in the country.

The young grass along the foot of this slope was thick and green; imagination missed from the picture rural sheep, their fleeces wet with April rain. Along the summit of the slope trees of oak and ash and maple and chestnut and poplar lifted against the sky their united forest strength. Between the trees above and the grass below, the embankment spread before the eye the enchantment of a spring landscape, with late

bare boughs and early green boughs and other boughs in blossom.

The earliest blossoms on our part of the earth's surface are nearly always white. They have forced their way to the sun along a frozen path and look akin to the perils of their road: the snow-threatened lily of the valley, the chill snowdrop, the frosty snowball, the bleak hawtree, the wintry wild cherry, the wintry dogwood. As the eye swept the park expanse this morning, here and there some of these were as the last tokens of winter's mantle instead of the first tokens of summer's.

There were flushes of color also, as where in deep soil, on a projection of rock, a pink hawthorn stood studded to the tips of its branches with leaf and flower. But such flushes of color were as false notes of the earth, as harmonies of summer thrust into the wrong places

and become discords. The time for them was not yet. The hour called for hardy adventurous things, awakened out of their cold sleep on the rocks. The blue of the firmament was not dark summer blue but seemed the sky's first pale response to the sun. The sun was not rich summer gold but flashed silver rays. The ground scattered no odors; all was the budding youth of Nature on the rocks.

Paths wind hither and thither over this park hillside. Benches are placed at different levels along the way. If you are going up, you may rest; if you are coming down, you may linger; if neither going up nor coming down, you may with a book seek out some retreat of shade and coolness and keep at a distance the millions that rush and crush around the park as waters roar against some lone mid-ocean island.

About eleven o'clock that morning, on one of these benches placed where rock is steepest and forest trees stand close together and vines are rank with shade, a sociable-looking little fellow of some ten hardy well-buffeted years had sat down for the moment without a companion. He had thrown upon the bench beside him his sun-faded, rain-faded, shapeless cap, uncovering much bronzed hair; and as though by this simple act he had cleared the way for business, he thrust one capable-looking hand deep into one of his pockets. The fingers closed upon what they found there, like the meshes of a deep-sea net filled with its catch, and were slowly drawn to the surface. The catch consisted of one-cent and five-cent pieces, representing the sales of his morning papers. He counted the coins one by one over into the palm of the other hand, which then

closed upon the total like another net, and dropped the treasure back into the deep sea of the other pocket.

His absorption in this process had been intense; his satisfaction with the result was complete. Perhaps after every act of successful banking there takes place in the mind of man, spendthrift and miser, a momentary lull of energy, a kind of brief *Pax vobiscum,* O my soul and stomach, my twin masters of need and greed! And possibly, as the lad deposited his earnings, he was old enough to enter a little way into this adult and despicable joy. Be this as it may, he was not the next instant up again and busy. He caught up his cap, dropped it not on his head but on one of his ragged knees; planted a sturdy hand on it and the other sturdy hand on the other knee; and with his sturdy legs swinging under the bench, toe kicking

heel and heel kicking toe, he rested briefly from life's battle.

The signs of battle were thick on him, unmistakable. The palpable sign, the conqueror's sign, was the profits won in the struggle of the streets. The other signs may be set down as loss—dirt and raggedness and disorder. His hair might never have been straightened out with a comb; his hands were not politely mentionable; his coarse shoes, which seemed to have been bought with the agreement that they were never to wear out, were ill-conditioned with general dust and the special grime of melted pitch from the typical contractor's cheapened asphalt; one of his stockings had a fresh rent and old rents enlarged their grievances.

A single sign of victory was better even than the money in the pocket—the whole lad himself. He was strongly

built, frankly fashioned, with happy grayish eyes, which had in them some of the cold warrior blue of the sky that day; and they were set wide apart in a compact round head, which somehow suggested a bronze sphere on a column of triumph. Altogether he belonged to that hillside of nature, himself a human growth budding out of wintry fortunes into life's April, opening on the rocks hardy and all white.

But to sit there swinging his legs—this did not suffice to satisfy his heart, did not enable him to celebrate his instincts; and suddenly from his thicket of forest trees and greening bushes he began to pour forth a thrilling little tide of song, with the native sweetness of some human linnet unaware of its transcendent gift.

Up the steep hill a man not yet of middle age had mounted from the flats. He

was on his way toward the parapet above. He came on slowly, hat in hand, perspiration on his forehead; that climb from base to summit stretches a healthy walker and does him good. At a turn of the road under the forest trees with shrubbery alongside he stopped suddenly, as a naturalist might pause with half-lifted foot beside a dense copse in which some unknown species of bird sang—a young bird just finding its notes.

It was his vocation to discover and to train voices. His definite work in music was to help perpetually to rebuild for the world that ever-sinking bridge of sound over which Faith aids itself in walking toward the eternal. This bridge of falling notes is as Nature's bridge of falling drops: individual drops appear for an instant in the rainbow, then disappear, but century after cen-

tury the great arch stands there on the sky unshaken. So throughout the ages the bridge of sacred music, in which individual voices are heard a little while and then are heard no longer, remains for man as one same structure of rock by which he passes over from the mortal to the immortal.

Such was his life-work. As he now paused and listened, you might have interpreted his demeanor as that of a professional musician whose ears brought tidings that greatly astonished him. The thought had at once come to him of how the New York papers once in a while print a story of the accidental finding in it of a wonderful voice—in New York, where you can find everything that is human. He recalled throughout the history of music instances in which some one of the world's famous singers had been picked up on life's road where

it was roughest. Was anything like this now to become his own experience? Falling on his ear was an unmistakable gift of song, a wandering, haunting, unidentified note under that early April blue. He had never heard anything like it. It was a singing soul.

Voice alone did not suffice for his purpose; the singer's face, personality, manners, some unfortunate strain in the blood, might debar the voice, block its acceptance, ruin everything. He almost dreaded to walk on, to explore what was ahead. But his road led that way, and three steps brought him around the woody bend of it.

There he stopped again. In an embrasure of rock on which vines were turning green, a little fellow, seasoned by wind and sun, with a countenance open and friendly, like the sky, was pouring out his full heart.

The instant the man came into view, the song was broken off. The sturdy figure started up and sprang forward with the instinct of business. When any one paused and looked questioningly at him, as this man now did, it meant papers and pennies. His inquiry was quite breathless:

"Do you want a paper, Mister? What paper do you want? I can get you one on the avenue in a minute."

He stood looking up at the man, alert, capable, fearless, ingratiating. The man had instantly taken note of the speaking voice, which is often a safer first criterion to go by than the singing voice itself. He pronounced it sincere, robust, true, sweet, victorious. And very quickly also he made up his mind that conditions must have been rare and fortunate with the lad at his birth:

blood will tell, and blood told now even in this dirt and in these rags.

His reply bore testimony to how appreciative he felt of all that faced him there so humanly on the rock.

"Thank you," he said, "I have read the papers."

Having thus disposed of some of the lad's words, he addressed a pointed question to the rest:

"But how did you happen to call me mister? I thought boss was what you little New-Yorkers generally said."

"I 'm not a New-Yorker," announced the lad, with ready courtesy and good nature. "I don't say boss. We are Southerners. I say mister."

He gave the man an unfavorable look as though of a mind to take his true measure; also as being of a mind to let the man know that he had not taken the boy's measure.

The man smiled at being corrected to such good purpose; but before he could speak again, the lad went on to clinch his correction:

"And I only say mister when I am selling papers and am not at home."

"What do you say when not selling papers and when you are at home?" asked the man, forced to a smile.

"I say 'sir,' if I say anything," retorted the lad, flaring up, but still polite.

The man looked at him with increasing interest. Another word in the lad's speech had caught his attention—Southerner.

That word had been with him a good deal in recent years; he had not quite seemed able to get away from it. Nearly all classes of people in New York who were not Southerners had been increasingly reminded that the Southerners were upon them. He had

satirically worked it out in his own mind that if he were ever pushed out of his own position, it would be some Southerner who pushed him. He sometimes thought of the whole New York professional situation as a public wonderful awful dinner at which almost nothing was served that did not have a Southern flavor as from a kind of pepper. The guests were bound to have administered to them their shares of this pepper; there was no getting away from the table and no getting the pepper out of the dinner. There was the intrusion of the South into every delicacy.

"We are Southerners," the lad had announced decisively; and there the flavor was again, though this time as from a mere pepper-box in a school basket. Thus his next remark was addressed to his own thoughts as well as to the lad:

"And so *you* are a Southerner!" he reflected audibly, looking down at the Southern plague in small form.

"Why, yes, Mister, we are Southerners," replied the lad, with a gay and careless patriotism; and as giving the handy pepper-box a shake, he began to dust the air with its contents: "I was born on an old Southern battle-field. When Granny was born there, it had hardly stopped smoking; it was still piled with wounded and dead Northerners. Why, one of the worst batteries was planted in our front porch."

This enthusiasm as to the front porch was assumed to be acceptable to the listener. The battery might have been a Cherokee rose.

The man had listened with a quizzical light in his eyes.

"In what direction did you say that battery was pointed?"

"I did n't say; but it was pointed up this way, of course."

The man laughed outright.

"And so you followed in the direction of the deadly Southern shell and came north—as a small grape-shot!"

"But, Mister, that was long ago. They had their quarrel out long ago. That 's the way we boys do: fight it out and make friends again. Don't you do that way?"

"It 's a very good way to do," said the man. "And so you sell papers?"

"I sell papers to people in the park, Mister, and back up on the avenue. Granny is particular. I 'm not a regular newsboy."

"I heard you singing. Does anybody teach you?"

"Granny."

"And so your grandmother is your music teacher?"

It was the lad's turn to laugh.

"Granny is n't my grandmother; Granny is my mother."

Toppling over in the dust of imagination went a gaunt granny image; in its place a much more vital being appeared just behind the form of the lad, guarding him even now while he spoke.

"And so your mother takes pupils?"

"Only me."

"Has any one heard you sing?"

"Only she."

It had become more and more the part of the man during this colloquy to smile; he felt repeatedly in the flank of his mind a jab of the comic spur. Now he laughed at the lad's deadly preparedness; business competition in New York had taught him that he who hesitates a moment is lost. The boy seemed ready with his answers before he heard the man's questions.

"Do you mind telling me your name?"

"My name is Ashby. Ashby Truesdale. We come from an old English family. What is your name, and what kind of family do you come from, Mister?"

"And where do you live?"

The lad wheeled, and strode to the edge of the rock,—the path along there is blasted out of solid rock,—and looking downward, he pointed to the first row of buildings in the distant flats.

"We live down there. You see that house in the middle of the block, the little old one between the two big ones?"

The man did not feel sure.

"Well, Mister, you see the statue of Washington and Lafayette?"

The man was certain he saw Washington and Lafayette.

"Well, from there you follow my fin-

ger along the row of houses till you come to the littlest, oldest, dingiest one. You see it now, don't you? We live up under the roof."

"What is the number?"

"It is n't any number. It 's half a number. We live in the half that is n't numbered; the other half gets the number."

"And you take your music lessons in one half?"

"Why, yes, Mister. Why not?"

"On a piano?"

"Why, yes, Mister; on *my* piano."

"Oh, you have a piano, have you?"

"There is n't any sound in about half the keys. Granny says the time has come to rent a better one. She has gone over to the art school to-day to pose to get the money."

A chill of silence fell between the talkers, the one looking up and the other

looking down. The man's next question was put in a more guarded tone:

"Does your mother pose as a model?"

"No, Mister, she does n't pose as a model. She 's posing as herself. She said I must have a teacher. Mister, were *you* ever poor?"

The man looked the boy over from head to foot.

"Do you think you are poor?" he asked.

The good-natured reply came back in a droll tone:

"Well, Mister, we certainly are n't rich."

"Let us see," objected the man, as though this were a point which had better not be yielded, and he began with a voice of one reckoning up items: "Two feet, each cheap at, say, five millions. Two hands—five millions apiece for hands. At least ten millions for each

eye. About the same for the ears. Certainly twenty millions for your teeth. Forty millions for your stomach. On the whole, at a rough estimate you must easily be worth over one hundred millions. There are quite a number of old gentlemen in New York, and a good many young ones, who would gladly pay that amount for your investments, for your securities."

The lad with eager upturned countenance did not conceal his amusement while the man drew this picture of him as a living ragged gold-mine, as actually put together and made up of pieces of fabulous treasure. A child's notion of wealth is the power to pay for what it has not. The wealth that childhood *is,* escapes childhood; it does not escape the old. What most concerned the lad as to these priceless feet and hands and eyes and ears was the hard-knocked-in

fact that many a time he ached throughout this reputed treasury of his being for a five-cent piece, and these reputed millionaires, acting together and doing their level best, could not produce one.

Nevertheless, this fresh and never-before-imagined image of his self-riches amused him. It somehow put him over into the class of enormously opulent things; and finding himself a little lonely on that new landscape, he cast about for some object of comparison. Thus his mind was led to the richest of all near-by objects.

"If I were worth a hundred million," he said, with a satisfied twinkle in his eyes, "I would be as rich as the cathedral."

A significant silence followed. The man broke it with a grave surprised inquiry:

"How did you happen to think of the cathedral?"

"I did n't happen to think of it; I could n't help thinking of it."

"Have you ever been in the cathedral?" inquired the man more gravely still.

"Been in it! We go there all the time. It 's our church. Why, good Lord! Mister, we are descended from a bishop!"

The man laughed outright long and heartily.

"Thank you for telling me," he said as one who suddenly feels himself to have become a very small object through being in the neighborhood of such hereditary beatitudes and ecclesiastical sanctities. "Are you, indeed? I am glad to know. Indeed, I am!"

"Why, Mister, we have been watching the cathedral from our windows for

years. We can see the workmen away up in the air as they finish one part and then another part. I can count the Apostles on the roof. You begin with James the Less and keep straight on around until you come out at Simon. Big Jim and Pete are in the middle of the row." He laughed.

"Surely you are not going to speak of an apostle as Pete! Do you think that is showing proper respect to an apostle?"

"But he was Pete when he was little. He was n't an apostle then and did n't have any respect."

"And you must n't call an apostle Big Jim! It sounds dreadful!"

"Then why did he try to call himself James the Greater? That sounds dreadful too. As far as size is concerned he is no bigger than the others: they are all nine and a half feet. The

Archangel Gabriel on the roof, he 's nine and a half. Everybody standing around on the outside of the roof is nine and a half. If Gabriel had been turned a little to one side, he would blow his trumpet straight over our flat. He did n't blow anywhere one night, for a big wind came up behind him and blew him down and he blew his trumpet at the gutter. But he did n't stay down," boasted the lad.

Throughout his talk he was making it clear that the cathedral was a neighborhood affair; that its haps and mishaps possessed for him the flesh and blood interest of a living person. Love takes mental possession of its object and by virtue of his affection the cathedral had become his companion.

"You seem rather interested in the cathedral. Very much interested," remarked the man, strengthening his

statement and with increased attention.

"Why, of course, Mister. I 've been passing there nearly every day since I 've been selling papers on the avenue. Sometimes I stop and watch the masons. When I went with Granny to the art school this morning, she told me to go home that way. I have just come from there. They are building another one of the chapels now, and the men are up on the scaffolding. They carried more rock up than they needed and they would walk to the edge and throw big pieces of it down with a smash. The old house they are using for the choir school is just under there. Sometimes when the class is practising, I listen from the outside. If they sing high, I sing high; if they sing low, I sing low. Why, Mister, I can sing up to—"

He broke off abruptly. He had been pouring out all kinds of confidences to his new-found friend. Now he hesitated. The boldness of his nature deserted him. The deadly preparedness failed. A shy appealing look came into his eyes as he asked his next question—a grave question indeed:

"Mister, do you love music?"

"Do I love music?" echoed the startled musician, pierced by the spear-like sincerity of the question, which seemed to go clean through him and his knowledge and to point back to childhood's springs of feeling. "Do I love music? Yes, some music, I hope. Some kinds of music, I hope."

These moderate, chastened words restored the boy's confidence and completely captured his friendship. Now

he felt sure of his comrade, and he put to him a more searching question:

"Do *you* know anything about the cathedral?"

The man smiled guiltily.

"A little. I know a little about the cathedral," he admitted.

There was a moment of tense, anxious silence. And now the whole secret came out:

"Do you know how boys get into the cathedral choir school?"

The man did not answer. He stood looking down at the lad, in whose eyes all at once a great baffled desire told its story. Then he pulled out his watch and merely said:

"I must be going. Good morning." He turned his way across the rock.

Disappointment darkened the lad's face when he saw that he was to receive no answer; withering blight dried up

its joy. But he recovered himself quickly.

"Well, I must be going, too," he said bravely and sweetly. "Good morning." He turned his way across the rock. But he had had a good time talking with this stranger, and, after all, he *was* a Southerner; and so, as his head was about to disappear below the cliff, he called back in his frank human gallant way:

"I 'm glad I met you, Mister."

The man went up and the boy went down.

The man, having climbed to the parapet, leaned over the stone wall. The tops of some of the tall poplar-trees, rooted far below, were on a level with his eyes. Often he stopped there to watch them swaying like upright plumes against the wind. They swayed now in the silvery April air with a ripple of

silvery leaves. His eyes sought out intimately the barely swollen buds on the boughs of other forest trees yet far from leaf. They lingered on the white blossoms of the various shrubs. They found the pink hawthorn; in the boughs of one of those trees one night in England in mid-May he had heard the nightingale, master singer of the non-human world. Up to him rose the enchanting hill-side picture of grass and moss and fern. It was all like a sheet of soft organ music to his nature-reading eyes.

While he gazed, he listened. Down past the shadows and the greenness, through the blossoms and the light, growing fainter and fainter, went a wandering little drift of melody, a haunting, unidentified sound under the blue cathedral dome of the sky. He reflected again that he had never heard

anything like it. It was, in truth, a singing soul.

Then he saw the lad's sturdy figure bound across the valley to join friends in play on the thoroughfare that skirts the park alongside the row of houses.

He himself turned and went in the direction of the cathedral.

As he walked slowly along, one thing haunted him remorsefully—the upturned face of the lad and the look in his eyes as he asked the question which brought out the secret desire of a life: "Do you know how boys get into the cathedral choir school?" Then the blight of disappointment when there was no answer.

The man walked thoughtfully on, seemingly as one who was turning over and over in his mind some difficult, delicate matter, looking at it on all sides and in every light, as he must do.

Finally he quickened his pace as though having decided what ought to be done. He looked the happier for his decision.

III

THAT night in an attic-like room of an old building opposite Morningside Park a tiny supper-table for two stood ready in the middle of the floor; the supper itself, the entire meal, was spread. There is a victory which human nature in thousands of lives daily wins over want, that though it cannot drive poverty from the scene, it can hide its desolation by the genius of choice and of touch. A battle of that brave and desperate kind had been won in this garret. Lacking every luxury, it had the charm of tasteful bareness, of exquisite penury. The supper-table of cheap wood roughly carpentered was hidden under a piece of

fine long-used table-linen; into the gleaming damask were wrought clusters of snowballs. The glare of a plain glass lamp was softened by a too costly silk shade. Over the rim of a common vase hung a few daffodils, too costly daffodils. The supper, frugal to a bargain, tempted the eye and the appetite by the good sense with which it had been chosen and prepared. Thus the whole scene betokened human nature at bay but victorious in the presence of that wolf, whose near-by howl startles the poor out of their sleep.

Into this empty room sounds penetrated through a door. They proceeded from piano-keys evidently so old that one wondered whether possibly they had not begun to be played on in the days of Beethoven, whether they were not such as were new on the clavichord of Bach. The fingers that pressed them were un-

mistakably those of a child. As the hands wandered up and down the keyboard, the ear now and then took notice of a broken string. There were many of these broken strings. The instrument plainly announced itself to be a remote, well-nigh mythical ancestor of the modern piano, preternaturally lingering on amid an innumerable deafening progeny. It suggested a superannuated human being whose loudest utterances have sunk to ghostly whispers in a corner.

Once the wandering hands stopped and a voice was heard. It sounded as though pitched to reach some one in an inner room farther away, possibly a person who might just have passed from a kitchen to a bedroom to make some change of dress. It was a very affectionate voice, very true and sweet, very tender, very endearing.

"Another string snapped to-day. There 's another key silent. There won't be any but silent keys soon."

There must have been a reply. Responding to it, the voice at the piano sounded again, this time very loyal and devoted to an object closer at hand:

"But when we do get a better one, we won't kick the old one down-stairs. It has done *its* best."

Whereupon the musical ancestor was encouraged to speak up again while he had a chance, being a very honored ancestor and not by any means dead in some regions. Soon, however, the voice pleaded anew with a kind of patient impatience:

"I 'm awfully hungry. Are n't you nearly ready?"

The reply could not be heard.

"Are you putting on the dress *I* like?"

The reply was not heard.

"Don't you want me to bring you a daffodil to wear at your throat?"

The reply was lost. For a few minutes the progenitor emptied his ancient lungs of some further moribund intimations of tone. Later came another protest, truly plaintive:

"You could n't look any nicer! I 'm awfully hungry!"

Then all at once there was a tremendous smash on the keys, a joyous smash, and a moment afterward the door was softly opened.

Mother and son entered the supper-room. One of his arms was around her waist, one of hers enfolded him about the neck and shoulders; they were laughing as they clung to one another.

The teacher of the portrait class and his pupils would hardly have recognized their model; the stranger on the hillside might not at once have identified the

newsboy. For model and newsboy, having laid aside the masks of the day which so often in New York persons find it necessary to wear,—the tragic mask, the comic mask, the callous, coarse, brutal mask, the mask of the human pack, the mask of the human sty,—model and newsboy reappeared at home with each other as nearly what in truth they were as the denials of life would allow.

There entered the room a woman of high breeding, with a certain Pallas-like purity and energy of face, clasping to her side her only child, a son whom she secretly believed to be destined to greatness. She was dressed not with the studied plainness and abnegation of the model in the studio, but out of regard for her true station and her motherly responsibilities. Her utmost wish was that in years to come, when he should

look back upon his childhood, he would always remember with pride his evenings with his mother. During the day he must see her drudge, and many a picture of herself on a plane of life below her own she knew to be fastened to his growing brain; but as nearly as possible blotting these out, daily blotting them out one by one, must be the evening pictures when the day's work was done, its disguises dropped, its humiliations over, and she, a serving-woman of fate, reappeared before him in the lineaments of his mother, to remain with him throughout his life as the supreme woman of the human race, his idol until death, his mother.

She now looked worthy of such an ideal. But it was upon him that her heart lavished every possible extravagance when nightly he had laid aside the coarse half-ragged fighting clothes of

the streets. In those after years when he was to gaze backward across a long distance, he must be made to realize that when he was a little fellow, it was his mother who first had seen his star while it was still low on the horizon; and that from the beginning she had so reared him that there would be stamped upon his attention the gentleness of his birth and a mother's resolve to rear him in keeping with this through the neediest hours.

While he was in his bath, she, as though she were his valet, had laid out trim house shoes and black stockings; and as the spring night had a breath of summer warmth, of almost Southern summer warmth, she had put out also a suit of white linen knickerbockers. Under his broad sailor collar she herself had tied a big, soft, flowing black ribbon of the finest silk. Above this rose the

solid head looking like a sphere on a column of triumph, with its lustrous bronzed hair, which, as she brushed it, she had tenderly stroked with her hands; often kissing the bronzed face ardent and friendly to the world and thinking to herself of the double blue in his eyes, the old Saxon blue of battle and the old Saxon blue of the minstrel, also.

It was the evening meal that always brought them together after the separation of the day, and he was at once curious to hear how everything had gone at the art school. With some unsold papers under his arm he had walked with her to the entrance, a new pang in his breast about her that he did not understand: for one thing she looked so plain, so common. At the door-step she had stopped and kissed him and bade him good-by. Her quiet quivering words were:

"Go home, dear, by way of the cathedral."

If he took the more convenient route, it would lead him into one of the city's main cross streets, beset with dangers. She would be able to sit more at peace through those hours of posing if she could know that he had gone across the cathedral grounds and then across the park as along a country road bordered with young grass and shrubs in bloom and forest trees in early leaf. She wished to keep all day before her eyes the picture of him as straying that April morning along such a country road —sometimes the road of faint far girlhood memories to her.

Then with a great incomprehensible look she had vanished from him. But before the doors closed, he, peering past her, had caught sight of the walls inside thickly hung with portraits of

men and women in rich colors and in golden frames. Into this splendid world his mother had vanished, herself to be painted.

Now as he began ravenously to eat his supper he wished to hear all about it. She told him. Part of her experience she kept back, a true part; the other, no less true, she described. With deft fingers she went over the somberly woven web of the hours, and plucking here a bright thread and there a bright thread, rewove these into a smaller picture, on which fell the day's far-separated sunbeams; the rays were condensed now and made a solid brightness.

This is how she painted for him a bright picture out of things not many of which were bright. The teacher of the portrait class, to begin, had been very considerate. He had arranged that she should leave her things with the

janitor's wife down-stairs, and not go up-stairs and take them off behind some screens in a corner of the room where the class was assembled. That would have been dreadful, to have to go behind the screens to take off her hat and gloves. Then instead of sending word for her to come up, he himself had come down. As he led the way past the confusing halls and studios, he had looked back over his shoulder just a little, to let her know that not for a moment did he lose thought of her. To have walked in front of her, looking straight ahead, might have meant that he esteemed her a person of no consequence. A master so walks before a servant, a superior before an inferior. Out of respect for her, he had even lessened the natural noisiness of his feet on the bare floor. If you put your feet down hard in the house, it means that

you are thinking of yourself and not of other people. He had mounted the stairs slowly lest she get out of breath as she climbed. When he preceded her into the presence of the class, he had turned as though he introduced to them his own mother. In everything he did he was really a man; that is, a gentleman. For being a gentleman is being really a man; if you are really a man, you *are* a gentleman.

As for the members of the class, they had been beautiful in their treatment of her. Not a word had been exchanged with them, but she could *feel* their beautiful thoughts. Sometimes when she glanced at them, while they worked, such beautiful expressions rested on their faces. Unconsciously their natures had opened like young flowers, and as at the hearts of young flowers there is for each a clear drop of honey, so in

each of their minds there must have been one same thought, the remembrance of their mothers. Altogether it was as though they were assembled there in honor of her, not to make use of her.

As to posing itself, one had not a thing to do but sit perfectly still! One got such a good rest from being too much on one's feet! And they had placed for her such a splendid carved-oak chair! When she took her seat, all at once she had felt as if at home again. There were immense windows; she had had all the fresh air she wished, and she did enjoy fresh air! The whole roof was a window, and she could look out at the sky: sometimes the loveliest clouds drifted over, and sometimes the dearest little bird flew past, no doubt on its way to the park. Last, but not least, she had not been crowded. In New York it was almost impossible to secure

a good seat in a public place without being nudged or bumped or crowded. But that had actually happened to her. She had had a delightful chair in a public place, with plenty of room in every direction. How fortunate at last to remember that she might pose! It would fit in perfectly at times when she did not have to go out for needlework or for the other demands. Dollars would now soon begin to be brought in like their bits of coal, by the scuttleful! And then the piano! And then the teacher and the lessons! And *then,* and *then*—

Her happy story ended. She had watched the play of lights on his face as sometimes he, though hungry, with fork in the air paused to listen and to question. Now as she finished and looked across the table at the picture of him under the lamplight, she was rewarded,

she was content; while he ate his plain food, out of her misfortunes she had beautifully nourished his mind. He did not know this; but she knew it, knew by his look and by his only comment:

"You had a perfectly splendid time, did n't you?"

She laughed to herself.

"Now, then," she said, coming to what had all along been most in her consciousness—"now, then, tell me about *your* day. Begin at the moment *you* left *me*."

He laid down his napkin,—he could eat no more, and there was nothing more to eat,—and he folded his hands quite like the head of the house at ease after a careless feast, and began his story.

Well, he had had a splendid day, too. After he had left her he had gone to the dealer's on the avenue with the un-

sold papers. Then he had crossed over to the cathedral, and for a while had watched the men at work up in the air. He had walked around to the choir school, but no one was there that morning, not a sound came from the inside. Then he had started down across the park. As he sat down to count his money, a man who had climbed up the hill-side stopped and asked him a great many questions: who taught him music and whether any one had ever heard him sing. This stranger also liked music and he also went to the cathedral, so he claimed. From that point the story wound its way onward across the busy hours till nightfall.

It was a child's story, not an older person's. Therefore it did not draw the line between pleasant and unpleasant, fair and unfair, right and wrong, which make up for each of us the history of

our checkered human day. It separated life as a swimmer separates the sea: there is one water which he parts by his passage. So the child, who is still wholly a child, divides the world.

But as she pondered, she discriminated. Out of the long, rambling narrative she laid hold of one overwhelming incident, forgetting the rest: a passing stranger, hearing a few notes of his voice, had stopped to question him about it. To her this was the first outside evidence that her faith in his musical gift was not groundless.

When he had ended his story she regarded him across the table with something new in her eyes—something of awe. She had never hinted to him what she believed he would some day be. She might be wrong, and thus might start him on the wrong course; or, being right, she might never have the

chance to start him on the right one. In either case she might be bringing to him disappointment, perhaps the failure of his whole life.

Now she still hid the emotion his story caused. But the stranger of the park had kindled within her that night what she herself had long tended unlit—the alabaster flame of worship which the mother burns before the altar of a great son.

An hour later they were in another small attic-like space next to the supper-room. Here was always the best of their evening. No matter how poor the spot, if there reach it some solitary ray of the great light of the world, let it be called your drawing-room. Where civilization sends its beams through a roof, there be your drawing-room. This part of the garret was theirs.

In one corner stood a small table on

which were some tantalizing books and the same lamp. Another corner was filled by the littlest, oldest imaginable of six-octave pianos, the mythical piano ancestor; on it were piled some yellowed folios, her music once. Thus two different rays of civilization entered their garret and fell upon the twin mountain-peaks of the night—books and music.

Toward these she wished regularly to lead him as darkness descended over the illimitable city and upon its weary grimy battle-fields. She liked him to fall asleep on one or the other of these mountain-tops. When he awoke, it would be as from a mountain that he would see the dawn. From there let him come down to the things that won the day; but at night back again to things that win life.

They were in their drawing-room, then, as she had taught him to call it,

and she was reading to him. A knock interrupted her. She interrogated the knock doubtfully to herself for a moment.

"Ashby," she finally said, turning her eyes toward the door, as a request that he open it.

The janitor of the building handed in a card. The name on the card was strange to her, and she knew no reason why a stranger should call. Then a foolish uneasiness attacked her: perhaps this unwelcome visit bore upon her engagement at the studio. They might not wish her to return; that little door to a larger income was to be shut in their faces. Perhaps she had made herself too plain. If only she had done herself a little more justice in her appearance!

She addressed the janitor with anxious courtesy:

"Will you ask him to come up?"

With her hand on the half-open door, she waited. If it should be some tradesman, she would speak with him there. She listened. Up the steps, from flight to flight, she could hear the feet of a man mounting like a deliberate good walker. He reached her floor. He approached her door and she stepped out to confront him. A gentleman stood before her with an unmistakable air of feeling himself happy in his mission. For a moment he forgot to state this mission, startled by the group of the two. His eyes passed from one to the other: the picture they made was an unlooked for revelation of life's harmony, of nature's sacredness.

"Is this Mrs. Truesdale?" he asked with appreciative deference.

She stepped back.

"I am Mrs. Truesdale," she replied in a way to remind him of his intrusion;

and not discourteously she partly closed the door and waited for him to withdraw. But he was not of a mind to withdraw; on the contrary, he stood stoutly where he was and explained:

"As I crossed the park this morning I happened to hear a few notes of a voice that interested me. I train the voice, Madam. I teach certain kinds of music. I took the liberty of asking the owner of the voice where he lived, and I have taken the further liberty of coming to see whether I may speak with you on that subject—about his voice."

This, then, was the stranger of the park whom she believed to have gone his way after unknowingly leaving glorious words of destiny for her. Instead of vanishing, he had reappeared, following up his discovery into her very presence. She did not desire him to follow up his

discovery. She put out one hand and pressed her son back into the room and was about to close the door.

"I should first have stated, of course," said the visitor, smiling quietly as with awkward self-recovery, "that I am the choir-master of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine."

Stillness followed, the stillness in which painful misunderstandings dissolve. The scene slowly changed, as when on the dark stage of a theater an invisible light is gradually turned, showing everything in its actual relation to everything else. In truth a shaft as of celestial light suddenly fell upon her doorway; a far-sent radiance rested on the head of her son; in her ears began to sound old words spoken ages ago to another mother on account of him she had borne. To her it was an annunciation.

Her first act was to place her hand on the head of the lad and bend it back until his eyes looked up into hers; his mother must be the first to congratulate him and to catch from his eyes their flash of delight as he realized all that this might mean: the fulfilment of life's dream for him.

Then she threw open the door.

"Will you come in?"

It was a marvelous welcome, a splendor of spiritual hospitality.

The musician took up straightway the purpose of his visit and stated it.

"Will you, then, send him to-morrow and let me try his voice?"

"Yes," she said as one who now must direct with firm responsible hand the helm of wayward genius, "I will send him."

"And if his voice should prove to be what is wanted," continued the music-

master, though with delicate hesitancy, "would he be—free? Is there any other person whose consent—"

She could not reply at once. The question brought up so much of the past, such tragedy! She spoke with composure at last:

"He can come. He is free. He is mine—wholly mine."

The choir-master looked across the small room at his pupil, who, upon the discovery of the visitor's identity, had withdrawn as far as possible from him.

"And you are willing to come?" he asked, wishing to make the first advance toward possible acquaintanceship on the new footing.

No reply came. The mother smiled at her awe-stricken son and hastened to his rescue.

"He is overwhelmed," she said, her own faith in him being merely strength-

ened by this revelation of his fright. "He is overwhelmed. This means so much more to him than you can understand."

"But you will come?" the choir-master persisted in asking. "You *will* come?"

The lad stirred uneasily on his chair.

"Yes, sir," he said all but inaudibly.

His inquisitive, interesting friend of the park path, then, was himself choir-master of St. John's! And he had asked him whether *he* knew anything about the cathedral! Whether *he* liked music! Whether *he* knew how boys got into the school! He had betrayed his habit of idly hanging about the old building where the choir practised and of singing with them to show what he could do and would do if he had the chance; and because he could not keep

from singing. He had called one of the Apostles Jim! And another Apostle Pete! He had rejoiced that Gabriel had not been strong enough to stand up in a high wind!

Thus with mortification he remembered the day. Then his thoughts were swept on to what now opened before him: he was to be taken into the choir, he was to sing in the cathedral. The high, blinding, stately magnificence of its scenes and processions lay before him.

More than this. The thing which had long been such a torture of desire to him, the hope that had grown within him until it began to burst open, had come true; his dream was a reality: he was to begin to learn music, he was to go where it was being taught. And the master who was to take him by the hand and lead him into that world of song

sat there quietly talking with his mother about the matter and looking across at him, studying him closely.

No; none of this was true yet. It might never be true. First, he must be put to the test. The man smiling there was sternly going to draw out of him what was in him. He was going to examine him and see what he amounted to. And if he amounted to nothing, then what?

He sat there shy, silent, afraid, all the hardy boldness and business preparedness and fighting capacity of the streets gone out of his mind and heart. He looked across at his mother; not even she could help him.

So there settled upon him that terror of uncertainty about their gift and their fate which is known only to the children of genius. For throughout the region of art, as in the world of the

physical, nature brings forth all things from the seat of sensitiveness and the young of both worlds appear on the rough earth unready.

"You *do* wish to come?" the choirmaster persisted in asking.

"Yes, sir," he replied barely, as though the words sealed his fate.

The visitor was gone, and they had talked everything over, and the evening had ended, and it was long past his bedtime, and she waited for him to come from the bedroom and say good night. Presently he ran in, climbed into her lap, threw his arms around her neck and pressed his cheek against hers.

"Now on this side," he said, holding her tightly, "and now on the other side, and now on both sides and all around."

She, with jealous pangs at this good-night hour, often thought already of

what a lover he would be when the time came—the time for her to be pushed aside, to drop out. These last moments of every night were for love; nothing lived in him but love. She said to herself that he was the born lover.

As he now withdrew his arms, he sat looking into her eyes with his face close to hers. Then leaning over, he began to measure his face upon her face, starting with the forehead, and being very particular when he got to the long eyelashes, then coming down past the nose. They were very silly and merry about the measuring of the noses. The noses would not fit the one upon the other, not being flat enough. He began to indulge his mischievous, teasing mood:

"Suppose he does n't like my voice!"

She laughed the idea to scorn.

"Suppose he would n't take me!"

"Ah, but he *will* take you."

"If he would n't have me, you 'd never want to see me any more, would you?"

She strained him to her heart and rocked to and fro over him.

"This is what I could most have wished in all the world," she said, holding him at arm's-length with idolatry.

"Not more than a fine house and servants and a greenhouse and a carriage and horses and a *new* piano—not more than everything you used to have!"

"More than anything! More than anything in this world!"

He returned to the teasing.

"If he does n't take me, I 'm going to run away. You won't want ever to see me any more. And then nobody will ever know what becomes of me because I could n't sing."

She strained him again to herself and murmured over him:

"My chorister! My minstrel! My life!"

"Good night and pleasant dreams!" he said, with his arms around her neck finally. "Good night and sweet sleep!"

Everything was quiet. She had tipped to his bedside and stood looking at him after slumber had carried him away from her, a little distance away.

"My heavenly guest!" she murmured. "My guest from the singing stars of God!"

Though worn out with the strain and excitements of the day, she was not yet ready for sleep. She must have the luxuries of consciousness; she must tread the roomy spaces of reflection and be soothed in their largeness. And so she had gone to her windows and had

remained there for a long time looking out upon the night.

The street beneath was dimly lighted. Traffic had almost ceased. Now and then a car sped past. The thoroughfare along here is level and broad and smooth, and being skirted on one side by the park, it offers to speeding vehicles the illusive freedom of a country road. Across the street at the foot of the park a few lights gleamed scant amid the April foliage. She began at the foot of the hill and followed the line of them upward, upward over the face of the rock, leading this way and that way, but always upward. There on the height in the darkness loomed the cathedral.

Often during the trouble and discouragement of years it had seemed to her that her own life and every other life would have had more meaning if only there had been, away off somewhere in

the universe, a higher evil intelligence to look on and laugh, to laugh pitilessly at every human thing. She had held on to her faith because she must hold on to something, and she had nothing else. Now as she stood there, following the winding night road over the rock, her thoughts went back and searched once more along the wandering pathway of her years; and she said that a Power greater than any earthly had led her with her son to the hidden goal of them both, the cathedral.

The next day brought no disappointment: he had rushed home and thrown himself into her arms and told her that he was accepted. He was to sing in the choir. The hope had become an actuality.

Later that day the choir-master himself had called again to speak to her when the pupil was not present. He

was guarded in his words but could not conceal the enthusiasm of his mood.

"I do not know what it may develop into," he said,—"that is something we cannot foretell,—but I believe it will be a great voice in the world. I do know that it will be a wonderful voice for the choir."

She stood before him mute with emotion. She was as dry sand drinking a shower.

"You have made no mistake," she said. "It is a great voice and he will have a great career."

The choir-master was impatient to have the lessons begin. She asked for a few days to get him in readiness. She reflected that he could not make his first appearance at the choir school in white linen knickerbockers. These were the only suitable clothes he had.

This school would be his first, for she

had taught him at home, haunted by a sense of responsibility that he must be specially guarded. Now just as the unsafe years came on for him, he would be safe in that fold. When natural changes followed as follow they must and his voice broke later on, and then came again or never came again, whatever afterward befell, behind would be the memories of his childhood. And when he had grown to full manhood, when he was an old man and she no longer with him, wherever on the earth he might work or might wander, always he would be going back to those years in the cathedral: they would be his safeguard, his consecration to the end.

Now a few days later she stood in the same favorite spot, at her windows; and it was her favorite hour to be there, the coming on of twilight.

All day until nearly sundown a cold April rain had fallen. These contradictory spring days of young green and winter cold the pious folk of older lands and ages named the days of the ice saints. They really fall in May, but this had been like one of them. So raw and chill had been the atmosphere of the grateless garret that the window-frames had been fastened down, their rusty catches clamped.

At the window she stood looking out and looking up toward a scene of splendor in the heavens.

It was sunset, the rain was over, the sky had cleared. She had been tracing the retreating line of sunlight on the hillside opposite. First it crossed the street to the edge of the park, then crossed the wet grass at the foot of the slope; then it passed upward over the bowed dripping shrubbery and lingered

on the tree-tops along the crest; and now the western sky was aflame behind the cathedral.

It was a gorgeous spectacle. The cathedral seemed not to be situated in the city, not lodged on the rocks of the island, but to be risen out of infinite space and to be based and to abide on the eternity of light. Long she gazed into that sublime vision, full of happiness at last, full of peace, full of prayer.

Standing thus at her windows at that hour, she stood on the pinnacle of her life's happiness.

From the dark slippery street shrill familiar sounds rose to her ear and drew her attention downward and she smiled. He was down there at play with friends whose parents lived in the houses of the row. She laughed as those victorious cries reached the upper air. Leaning forward, she pressed her

face against the window-pane and peered over and watched the group of them. Sometimes she could see them and sometimes not as they struggled from one side of the street to the other. No one, whether younger or older, stronger or weaker, was ever defeated down there; everybody at some time got worsted; no one was ever defeated. All the whipped remained conquerors. Unconquerable childhood! She said to herself that she must learn a lesson from it once more—to have always within herself the will and spirit of victory.

With her face still against the glass she caught sight of something approaching carefully up the street. It was the car of a physician who had a patient in one of the houses near by. This was his hour to make his call. He guided the car himself, and the great mass of

tons in weight responded to his guidance as if it possessed intelligence, as if it entered into his foresight and caution: it became to her, as she watched it, almost conscious, almost human. She thought of it as being like some great characters in human life which need so little to make them go easily and make them go right. A wise touch, and their enormous influence is sent whither it should be sent by a pressure that would not bruise a leaf.

She chid herself once more that in a world where so often the great is the good she had too often been hard and bitter; that many a time she had found pleasure in setting the empty cup of her life out under its clouds and catching the showers of nature as though they were drops of gall.

All at once her attention was riveted on an object up the street. Around a

bend a few hundred yards away a huge wild devil of a thing swung unsteadily, recklessly, almost striking the curb and lamp-post; and then, righting itself, it came on with a rush—a mindless destroyer. Now on one side of the street, now in the middle, now on the other side; gliding along through the twilight, barely to be seen, creeping nearer and nearer through the shadows, now again on the wrong side of the street where it would not be looked for.

A bolt of horror shot through her. She pressed her face quickly against the window-panes as closely as possible, searching for the whereabouts of the lads. As she looked, the playing struggling mass of them went down in the road, the others piled on one. She thought she knew which one,—he was the strongest,—then they were lost from her sight, as they rolled in nearer to the

sidewalk. And straight toward them rushed that destroyer in the streets. She tried to throw up the sashes. She tried to lean out and cry down to him, to wave her hands to him with warning as she had often done with joy. She could not raise the sashes. She had not the strength left to turn the rusty bolts. Nor was there time. She looked again; she saw what was going to happen. Then with frenzy she began to beat against the window-sashes and to moan and try to stifle her own moans. And then shrill startled screams and piteous cries came up to her, and crazed now and no longer knowing what she did, she struck the window-panes in her agony until they were shattered and she thrust her arms out through them with a last blind instinct to wave to him, to reach him, to drag him out of the way. For some mo-

ments her arms hung there outside the shattered window-glass, and a shower of crimson drops from her fingers splashed on the paving-stones below. She kept on waving her lacerated hands more and more feebly, slowly; and then they were drawn inward after her body which dropped unconscious to the garret floor.

IV

IT was a gay scene over at the art school next morning. Even before the accustomed hour the big barnlike room, with a few prize pictures of former classes scattered about the walls, and with the old academy easels standing about like a caravan of patient camels ever loaded with new burdens but ever traveling the same ancient sands of art—even before nine o'clock the barnlike room presented a scene of eager healthy animal spirits. On the easel of every youthful worker, nearly finished, lay the portrait of the mother.

In every case it had been differently done, inadequately done; but in all cases it had been done. Hardly could any ob-

server have failed to recognize what was there depicted. Beyond smearings and daubings of paint, as past the edges of concealing clouds, one caught glimpses of a serene and steadfast human radiance. There one beheld the familiar image of that orb which in dark and pathless hours has through all ages been the guardian light of the world—the mother.

The best in them had gone into the painting of this portrait, and the consciousness of our best gives us the sense of our power, and the consciousness of our power yields us our enthusiasm; hence the exhilaration and energy of the studio scene.

The interest of the members of the class was not concerned solely with the portrait, however: a larger share went to the model herself. They had become strongly bound to her. All the more

perhaps because she held them firmly to the understanding that her life touched theirs only at the point of the stranger in need of a small sum of money. Repulsed and baffled in their wish to know her better, they nevertheless became aware that she was undergoing a wonderful transformation on her own account. The change had begun after the ordeal of the first morning. When she returned for the second sitting, and then at later sittings, they had remarked this change, and had spoken of it to one another—that she was as a person into whose life some joyous, unbelievable event has fallen, brightening the present and the future. Every day some old cloudy care seemed to loose itself from its lurking-place and drift away from her mind, leaving her face less obscured and thus the more beautifully revealed to them. Now, with the end of the sit-

tings not far off, what they looked forward to with most regret was the last sitting, when she, leaving her portrait in their hands, would herself vanish, taking with her both the mystery of her old sorrows and the mystery of this new happiness.

Promptly at nine o'clock the teacher of the class entered, greeted them, and glanced around for the model. Not seeing her, he looked at his watch, then without comment crossed to the easels, and studied again the progress made the previous day, correcting, approving, guiding, encouraging. His demeanor showed that he entered into the mounting enthusiasm of his class for this particular piece of work.

A few minutes were thus quickly consumed. Then, watch in hand once more, he spoke of the absence of the model:

"Something seems to detain the model this morning. But she has sent me no word and she will no doubt be here in a few minutes."

He went back to the other end of the studio and sat down, facing them with the impressiveness which belonged to him even without speech. They fixed their eyes on him with the usual expectancy. Whenever as now an unforeseen delay occurred, he was always prompt to take advantage of the interval with a brief talk. To them there were never enough of these brief talks, which invariably drew human life into relationship to the art of portraiture, and set the one reality over against the other reality—the turbulence of a human life and the still image of it on the canvas. They hoped he would thus talk to them now; in truth he had the air of casting about in his

mind for a theme best suited to the moment.

That mother, now absent, when she had blindly found her way to him, asking to pose, had fallen into good hands. He was a great teacher and he was a remarkable man, remarkable even to look at. Massively built, with a big head of black hair, olive complexion, and bluntly pointed, black beard, and with a mold of countenance grave and strong, he looked like a great Rembrandt; like some splendid full-length portrait by Rembrandt painted as that master painted men in the prime of his power. With the Rembrandt shadows on him even in life. Even when the sun beat down upon him outdoors, even when you met him in the blaze of the city streets, he seemed not to have emerged from shadow, to bear on him-

self the traces of a human night, a living darkness. There was light within him but it did not irradiate him.

Once he had been a headlong art student himself, starting out to become a great painter, a great one. After years abroad under the foremost masters and other years of self-trial with every favorable circumstance his, nature had one day pointed her unswerved finger at his latest canvas as at the earlier ones and had judged him to the quick: you will never be a great painter. If you cannot be content to remain less, quit, stop!

Thus youth's choice and a man's half a lifetime of effort and ambition ended in abandonment of effort not because he was a failure but because the choice of a profession had been a blunder. A multitude of men topple into this chasm and crawl out nobody. Few of them

at middle age in the darkness of that pit of failure can grope within themselves for some second candle and by it once more become illumined through and through. He found *his* second candle,—it should have been his first,—and he lighted it and it became the light of his later years; but it did not illumine him completely, it never dispelled the shadows of the flame that had burned out.

What he did was this: having reached the end of his own career as a painter, he turned and made his way back to the fields of youth, and taking his stand by that ever fresh path, always, as students would rashly pass him, he halted them like a wise monitor, describing the best way to travel, warning of the difficulties of the country ahead, but insisting that the goal was worth the toil and the trouble; searching secretly among his pupils year after year for signs of what

he was not, a great painter, and pouring out his sympathies on all those who, like himself, would never be one.

Now he sat looking across at his class, the masterful teacher of them. They sat looking responsively at him. Then he took up his favorite theme:

"Your work on this portrait is your best work, because the model, as I stated to you at the outset would be the case, has called forth your finer selves; she has caused you to *feel.* And she has been able to do this because her countenance, her whole being, radiates one of the great passions and faiths of our common humanity—the look of reverent motherhood. You recognize that look, that mood; you believe in it; you honor it; you have worked over its living eloquence. Observe, then, the result. Turn to your canvases and see how, though proceeding differently, you have

all dipped your brushes as in a common medium; how you have all drawn an identical line around that old-time human landmark. You have in truth copied from her one of the great beacon-lights of expression that has been burning and signaling through ages upon ages of human history—the look of the mother, the angel of self-sacrifice to the earth.

"While we wait, we might go a little way into this general matter, since you, in the study of portraiture, will always have to deal with it. This look of hers, which you have caught on your canvases, and all the other great beacon-lights of human expression, stand of course for the inner energies of our lives, the leading forces of our characters. But, as ages pass, human life changes; its chief elements shift their relative places, some forcing their way

to the front, others being pushed to the rear; and the prominent beacon-lights change correspondingly. Ancient ones go out, new ones appear; and the art of portraiture, which is the undying historian of the human countenance, is subject to this shifting law of the birth and death of its material.

"Perhaps more ancient lights have died out of human faces than modern lights have been kindled to replace them. Do you understand why? The reason is this: throughout an immeasurable time the aim of nature was to make the human countenance as complete an instrument of expression as it could possibly be. Man, except for his gestures and wordless sounds, for ages had nothing else with which to speak; he must speak with his face. And thus the primitive face became the chronicle of what was going on within him as well

as of what had taken place without. It was his earliest bulletin-board of intelligence. It was the first parchment to bear tidings; it was the original newspaper; it was the rude, but vivid, primeval book of the woods. The human face was all that. Ages more had to pass before spoken language began, and still other ages before written language began. Thus for an immeasurable time nature developed the face and multiplied its expressions to enable man to make himself understood. At last this development was checked; what we may call the natural occupation of the face culminated. Civilization began, and as soon as civilization began, the decline in natural expressiveness began with it. Gradually civilization supplanted primeval needs; it contrived other means for doing what the face alone had done frankly, marvelously.

When you can print news on paper, you may cease to print news on the living countenance. Moreover, the aim of civilization is to develop in us the consciousness not to express, but to suppress. Its aim is not to reveal, but to conceal, thought and emotion; not to make the countenance a beacon-light, but a muffler of the inner candle, whatever that candle for the time may be. All our ruling passions, good or bad, noble or ignoble, we now try publicly to hide. This is civilization. And thus the face, having started out expressionless in nature, tends through civilization to become expressionless again.

"How few faces does any one of us know that frankly radiate the great passions and moods of human nature! What little is left of this ancient tremendous drama is the poor pantomime of the stage. Search crowds, search

the streets. See everywhere masked faces, telling as little as possible to those around them of what they glory in or what they suffer. Search modern portrait galleries. Do you find portraits of either men or women who radiate the overwhelming passions, the vital moods, of our galled and soaring nature? It is not a long time since the Middle Ages. In the stretch of history centuries shrink to nothing, and the Middle Ages are as the earlier hours of our own historic day. But has there not been a change even within that short time? Did not the medieval portrait-painters portray in their sitters great moods as no painter portrays them now? How many painters of to-day can find great moods in the faces of their sitters?

"And so I come again to your model. What makes her so remarkable, so sig-

nificant, so touching, so exquisite, so human, is the fact that her face seems almost a survival out of a past in which the beacon-lights of humanity did more openly appear on the features. In her case one beacon-light most of all,—the greatest that has ever shone on the faces of women,—the one which seems to be slowly vanishing from the faces of modern women—the look of the mother: that transfiguration of the countenance of the mother who believed that the birth of a child was the divine event in her existence, and the emotions and energies of whose life centered about her offspring. How often does any living painter have his chance to paint that look now! Galleries are well filled with portraits of contemporary women who have borne children: how often among these is to be found the portrait of the mother of old?"

He rose. The talk was ended. He looked again at his watch, and said:

"It does not seem worth while to wait longer. Evidently your model has been kept away to-day. Let us hope that no ill has befallen her and that she will be here to-morrow. If she is here, we shall go on with the portrait. If she should not be here, I shall have another model ready, and we shall take up another study until she returns. Bring fresh canvases."

He left the room. They lingered, looking again at their canvases, understanding their own work as they had not hitherto and more strongly than ever drawn toward their model whom that day they missed. Slowly and with disappointment and with many conjectures as to why she had not come, they separated.

V

IT was Sunday. All round St. Luke's Hospital quiet reigned. The day was very still up there on the heights under the blue curtain of the sky.

When he had been hurled against the curb on the dark street, had been rolled over and tossed there and left there with no outcry, no movement, as limp and senseless as a mangled weed, the careless crowd which somewhere in the city every day gathers about such scenes quickly gathered about him. In this throng was the physician whose car stood near by; and he, used to sights of suffering but touched by that tragedy of unconscious child and half-crazed

mother, had hurried them in his own car to St. Luke's—to St. Luke's, which is always open, always ready, and always free to those who lack means.

Just before they stopped at the entrance she had pleaded in the doctor's ear for a luxury.

"To the private ward," he said to those who lifted the lad to the stretcher, speaking as though in response to her entreaty

"One of the best rooms," he said before the operation, speaking as though he shouldered the responsibility of the further expense. "And a room for her near by," he added. "Everything for them! Everything!"

So there he was now, the lad, or what there was left of him, this quiet Sunday, in a pleasant room opposite the cathedral. The air was like early summer.

The windows were open. He lay on his back, not seeing anything. The skin of his forehead had been torn off; there was a bandage over his eyes. And there were bruises on his body and bruises on his face, which was horribly disfigured. The lips were swollen two or three thicknesses; it was agony for him to speak. When he realized what had happened, after the operation, his first mumbled words to her were:

"They will never have me now."

About the middle of the forenoon of this still Sunday morning, when the doctor left, she followed him into the hall as usual, and questioned him as usual with her eyes. He encouraged her and encouraged himself:

"I believe he is going to get well. He has the will to get well, he has the bravery to get well. He is brave about it; he is as brave as he can be."

"Of course he is brave," she said scornfully. "Of course he is brave."

"The love of such a mother would call him back to life," he added, and he laid one of his hands on her head for a moment.

"Don't do that," she said, as though the least tenderness toward herself at such a moment would unnerve her, melt away all her fortitude.

Everybody had said he was brave, the head nurse, the day nurse, the night nurse, the woman who brought in the meals, the woman who scrubbed the floor. All this had kept her up. If anybody paid any kind of tribute to him, realized in any way what he was, this was life to her.

After the doctor left, as the nurse was with him, she walked up and down the halls, too restless to be quiet.

At the end of one hall she could look

down on the fragrant leafy park. Yes, summer was nigh. Where a little while before had been only white blossoms, there were fewer white now, more pink, some red, many to match the yellow of the sun. The whole hillside of swaying boughs seemed to quiver with happiness. Her eyes wandered farther down to the row of houses at the foot of the park. She could see the dreadful spot on the street, the horrible spot. She could see her shattered window-panes up above. The points of broken glass still seemed to slit the flesh of her hands within their bandages.

She shrank back and walked to the end of the transverse hall. Across the road was the cathedral. The morning service was just over. People were pouring out through the temporary side doors and the temporary front doors so placidly, so contentedly! Some were

evidently strangers; as they reached the outside they turned and studied the cathedral curiously as those who had never before seen it. Others turned and looked at it familiarly, with pride in its unfolding form. Some stopped and looked down at the young grass, stroking it with the toes of their fine shoes; they were saying how fresh and green it was. Some looked up at the sky; they were saying how blue it was. Some looked at one another keenly; they were discussing some agreeable matter, being happy to get back to it now after the service. Not one of them looked across at the hospital. Not a soul of them seemed to be even aware of its existence. Not a soul of them!

Particularly her eyes became riveted upon two middle-aged ladies in black who came out through a side door of the cathedral—slow-paced women, bereft,

full of pity. As they crossed the yard, a gray squirrel came jumping along in front of them on its way to the park. One stooped and coaxed it and tried to pet it: it became a vital matter with both of them to pour out upon the little creature which had no need of it their pent-up, ungratified affection. With not a glance to the window where she stood, with her mortal need of them, her need of all mothers, of everybody—her mortal need of everybody! Why were they not there at his bedside? Why had they not heard? Why had not all of them heard? Why had anything else been talked of that day? Why were they not all massed around the hospital doors, tearful with their sympathies? How could they hold services in the cathedral—the usual services? Why was it not crowded to the doors with the clergy of all faiths and the lay-

men of every land, lifting one outcry against such destruction? Why did they not stop building temples to God, to the God of life, to the God who gave little children, until they had stopped the massacre of children, His children in the streets!

Yes; everybody had been kind. Even his little rivals who had fought with him over the sale of papers had given up some of their pennies and had bought flowers for him, and one of them had brought their gift to the main hospital entrance. Every day a shy group of them had gathered on the street while one came to inquire how he was. Kindness had rained on her; there was that in the sight of her that unsealed kindness in every heart.

She had been too nearly crazed to think of this. Her bitterness and anguish broke through the near cordon of

sympathy and went out against the whole brutal and careless world that did not care—to legislatures that did not care, to magistrates that did not care, to juries that did not care, to officials that did not care, to drivers that did not care, to the whole city that did not care about the massacre in the streets.

Through the doors of the cathedral the people streamed out unconcerned. Beneath her, along the street, young couples passed, flushed with their climb of the park hillside, and flushed with young love, young health. Sometimes they held each other's hands; they innocently mocked her agony with their careless joy.

One last figure issued from the side door of the cathedral hurriedly and looked eagerly across at the hospital—looked straight at her, at the window, and came straight toward the entrance

below—the choir-master. She had not sent word to him or to any one about the accident; but he, when his new pupil had failed to report as promised, had come down to find out why. And he, like all the others, had been kind; and he was coming now to inquire what he could do in a case where nothing could be done. She knew only too well that nothing could be done.

The bright serene hours of the day passed one by one with nature's carelessness about the human tragedy. It was afternoon and near the hour for the choral even-song across the way at the cathedral, the temporary windows of which were open.

She had relieved the nurse, and was alone with him. Often during these days he had put out one of his hands and groped about with it to touch her, turn-

ing his head a little toward her under his bandaged eyes, and apparently feeling much mystified about her, but saying nothing. She kept her bandaged hands out of his reach but leaned over him in response and talked ever to him, barely stroking him with the tips of her stiffened fingers.

The afternoon was so quiet that by and by through the opened windows a deep note sent a thrill into the room—the awakened soul of the organ. And as the two listened to it in silence, soon there floated over to them the voices of the choir as the line moved slowly down the aisle, the blended voices of the chosen band, his school-fellows of the altar. By the bedside she suddenly rocked to and fro, and then she bent over and said with a smile in her tone:

"Do you hear? Do you hear them?"

He made a motion with his lips to

speak but they hurt him too much. So he nodded: that he heard them.

A moment later he tugged at the bandage over his eyes.

She sprang toward him:

"O my precious one, you must not tear the bandage off your eyes!"

"I want to see you!" he mumbled. "It has been so long since I saw you! What 's the matter with you? Where are your hands? Why don't you put your arms around me?"

VI

THE class had been engaged with another model. Their work was forced and listless. As days passed without the mother's return, their thought and their talk concerned itself more and more with her disappearance. Why had she not come back? What had befallen her? What did it all mean? Would they ever know?

One day after their luncheon-hour, as they were about to resume work, the teacher of the class entered. He looked shocked; his look shocked them; instant sympathy ran through them. He spoke with difficulty:

"She has come back. She is downstairs. Something had befallen her in-

deed. She told me as briefly as possible and I tell you all I know. Her son, a little fellow who had just been chosen for the cathedral choir school was run over in the street. A mention of it—the usual story—was in the papers, but who of us reads such things in the papers? They bore us; they are not even news. He was taken to St. Luke's, and she has been at St. Luke's, and the end came at St. Luke's, and all the time we have been here a few yards distant and have known nothing of it. Such is New York! It was to help pay for his education in music that she first came to us, she said. And it was the news that he had been chosen for the choir school that accounts for the new happiness which we saw brighten her day by day. Now she comes again for the same small wage, but with other need, no doubt: the expenses of it all,

a rose-bush for his breast. She told me this calmly as though it caused her no grief. It was not my privilege, it is not our privilege, to share her unutterable bereavement.

"She has asked to go on with the sittings. I have told her to come to-morrow. But she does not realize all that this involves with the portrait. You will have to bring new canvases, it will have to be a new work. She is in mourning. Her hands will have to be left out, she has hurt them; they are bandaged. The new portrait will be of the head and face only. But the chief reason is the change of expression. The light which was in her face and which you have partly caught upon your canvases, has died out; it was brutally put out. The old look is gone. It is gone, and will never come back—the tender, brooding, reverent happiness

and peace of motherhood with the child at her knee—that great earthly beacon-light in women of ages past. It was brutally put out but it did not leave blankness behind it. There has come in its place another light, another ancient beacon-light on the faces of women of old—the look of faith in immortal things. She is not now the mother with the tenderness of this earth but the mother with the expectation of eternity. Her eyes have followed him who has left her arms and gone into a distance. Ever she follows him into that distance. Your portrait, if you can paint it, will be the mother with the look of immortal things in her face."

When she entered the room next morning, at the sight of her in mourning and so changed in every way, with one impulse they all rose to her. She

took no notice,—perhaps it would have been unendurable to notice,—but she stepped forward as usual, and climbed to the platform without faltering, and he posed her for the head and shoulders. Then, to study the effect from different angles, he went behind the easels, passing from one to another. As he returned, with the thought of giving her pleasure, he brought along with him one of the sketches of herself and held it out before her.

"Do you recognize it?" he asked.

She refused to look at first. Then arousing herself from her indifference she glanced at it. But when she beheld there what she had never seen—how great had been her love of him; when she beheld there the light now gone out and realized that it meant the end of happy days with him, she shut her eyes quickly and jerked her head to one side

with a motion for him to take the picture away. But she had been brought too close to her sorrow and suddenly she bent over her hands like a snapped reed and the storm of her grief came upon her.

They started up to get to her. They fought one another to get to her. They crowded around the platform, and tried to hide her from one another's eyes, and knelt down, and wound their arms about her, and sobbed with her; and then they lifted her and guided her behind the screens.

"Now, if you will allow them," he said, when she came out with them, one of them having lent her a veil, "some of these young friends will go home with you. And whenever you wish, whenever you feel like it, come back to us. We shall be ready. We shall be waiting. We shall all be glad."

On the heights the cathedral rises—slowly, as the great houses of man's Christian faith have always risen.

Years have drifted by as silently as the winds since the first rock was riven where its foundations were to be laid, and still all day on the clean air sounds the lonely clink of drill and chisel as the blasting and the shaping of the stone goes on. The snows of winters have drifted deep above its rough beginnings; the suns of many a spring have melted the snows away. Well nigh a generation of human lives has already measured its brief span about the corner-stones. Far-brought, many-tongued toilers, toiling on the rising walls, have dropped their work and stretched themselves in their last sleep; others have climbed to their places; the work goes on. Upon the shoulders of the images of the Apostles, which stand about the

chancel, generations of pigeons—the doves of the temple whose nests are in the niches—upon the shoulders of the Apostles generations of pigeons born in the niches have descended out of the azure as with the benediction of shimmering wings. Generations of the wind-borne seeds of wild flowers have lodged in low crevices and have sprouted and blossomed, and as seeds again have been blown further on—harbingers of vines and mosses already on their venerable way.

A mighty shape begins to answer back to the cathedrals of other lands and ages, bespeaking for itself admittance into the league of the world's august sanctuaries. It begins to send its annunciation onward into ages yet to be, so remote, so strange, that we know not in what sense the men of it will even be our human brothers

save as they are children of the same Father.

Between this past and this future, the one of which cannot answer because it is too late and the other of which can not answer because it is too soon—between this past and this future the cathedral stands in a present that answers back to it more and more. For a world of living men and women see kindled there the same ancient flame that has been the light of all earlier stations on that solitary road of faith which runs for a little space between the two eternities—a road strewn with the dust of countless wayfarers bearing each a different cross of burden but with eyes turned toward the same Cross of hope.

As on some mountain-top a tall pine-tree casts its lengthened shadow upon the valleys far below, round and round with the circuit of the sun, so the cathe-

dral flings hither and thither across the whole land its spiritual shaft of light. A vast, unnumbered throng begin to hear of it, begin to look toward it, begin to grow familiar with its emerging form. In imagination they see its chapels bathed in the glories of the morning sun; they remember its unfinished dome gilded at the hush of sunsets. Between the roar of the eastern and of the western ocean its organ speaks of a Divine peace above mortal storm. Pilgrims from afar, known only to themselves as pilgrims, being pilgrim-hearted but not pilgrim-clad, reach at its gates the borders of their Gethsemane. Bowed as penitents, they hail its lily of forgiveness and the resurrection.

Slowly the cathedral rises, in what unknown years to stand finished! Crowning a city of new people, let it be hoped, of better laws. Finished and

standing on its rock for the order of the streets, for order in the land and order throughout the world, for order in the secret places of the soul. Majestical rebuker of the waste of lives, rebuker of a country which invites all lives into it and wastes lives most ruthlessly—lives which it stands there to shelter and to foster and to save.

So it speaks to the distant through space and time; but it speaks also to the near.

Although not half risen out of the earth, encumbering it rough and shapeless, already it draws into its service many who dwell around. These seek to cast their weaknesses on its strength, to join their brief day to its innumerable years, to fall into the spiritual splendor of it as out in space small darkened wanderers drop into the orbit of a sun. Anguished memories begin to bequeath

their jewels to its shrine; dimmed eyes will their tears to its eyes, its windows. Old age with one foot in the grave drags the other resignedly about its crypt. In its choir sound the voices of children herded in from the green hillside of life's April.

Rachel Truesdale! Her life became one of these near-by lives which it blesses, a darkened wanderer caught into the splendor of a spiritual sun. It gathered her into its service; it found useful work for her to do; and in this new life of hers it drew out of her nature the last thing that is ever born of the mother—faith that she is separated a little while from her children only because they have received the gift of eternal youth.

Many a proud happy thought became hers as time went on. She had had her

share in its glory, for it had needed him whom she had brought into the world. It had called upon him to help give song to its message and to build that ever-falling rainbow of music over which human Hope walks into the eternal.

Always as the line of white-clad choristers passed down the aisle, among them was one who brushed tenderly against her as he walked by, whom no one else saw. Rising above the actual voices and heard by her alone, up to the dome soared a voice dearer, more thrilling, than the rest.

Often she was at her window, watching the workmen at their toil as they brought out more and more the great shape on the heights. Often she stood looking across at the park hillside opposite. Whenever spring came back and the slope lived again with young leaves

and white blossoms, always she thought of him. Always she saw him playing in an eternal April. When autumn returned and leaves withered and dropped, she thought of herself.

Sometimes standing beside his piano.

Having always in her face the look of immortal things.

. . . . . .

The cathedral there on its rock for ages saying:

"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

THE END

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

PS
1034
C38
1916

Allen, James Lane
A cathedral singer